



# CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN (CYCP) REPORT CARD

ALEXANDRIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ENSURING EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS TODAY AND TOMORROW

## FEBRUARY IS...

Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month *and* Healthy Relationships Month

## CYCP GOAL

All Children, Youth, and Families will be Physically Safe and Healthy

## YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

In honor of Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month and Healthy Relationships Month, we are celebrating the Keep It 360 Peer Advocates! The Peer Advocates are: **Yaerelin (student at Northern VA Community College), Nana (Senior at ACHS), Sylvia (Senior at ACHS), Anna (Senior at ACHS), Yanelvis (Junior at ACHS), Alayit (Junior at ACHS), Lenhle (Junior at ACHS), and Chloe (Sophomore at ACHS).**

Through a partnership between the Sexual Assault Center (SAC), Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA), the Peer Advocates were hired and trained to educate their peers on making healthy life choices.



Each month, they present workshops to students at the Hammond Middle School LINK Club. All workshops focus on prevention topics, such as healthy relationships, substance abuse prevention, anti-bullying, dating violence prevention, goal setting and visioning, cyber safety and social media boundaries. Since October 2021, they have delivered 12 workshops to the same 85-115 students.



They have also presented to youth at the annual Youth Leadership Conference in Alexandria, served on panels, and serve on several of the City's boards and commissions. All eight Advocates report that they have grown as a leader since becoming a Peer Advocate.

"As a peer advocate, I've learned not only about sexual assault/domestic violence and drug abuse prevention, but becoming a leader. I used to be afraid of using my voice but now I feel confident to share anything. I appreciate the efforts our supervisors offer and make sure our well-being is just as important."

In addition to the knowledge and leadership skills they have gained, the Peer Advocates also celebrate the friendships they have made along the way. "Being a Peer Advocate has been great, I have learned so many things and have made great relationships."





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## RESULT

All young people live healthy lives and violence-free

## WHY THIS MATTERS

During adolescence, young people learn how to form safe and healthy relationships with friends, parents, caregivers, teachers, and romantic partners. Healthy relationships are ones where each person's independence is respected, decisions are made without fear of retribution or retaliation, arguments remain calm, and there is mutual trust, good communication, and consent. Healthy dating during adolescence can be an important way to develop social-emotional skills and build positive relationships in other areas, such as in school and at work.



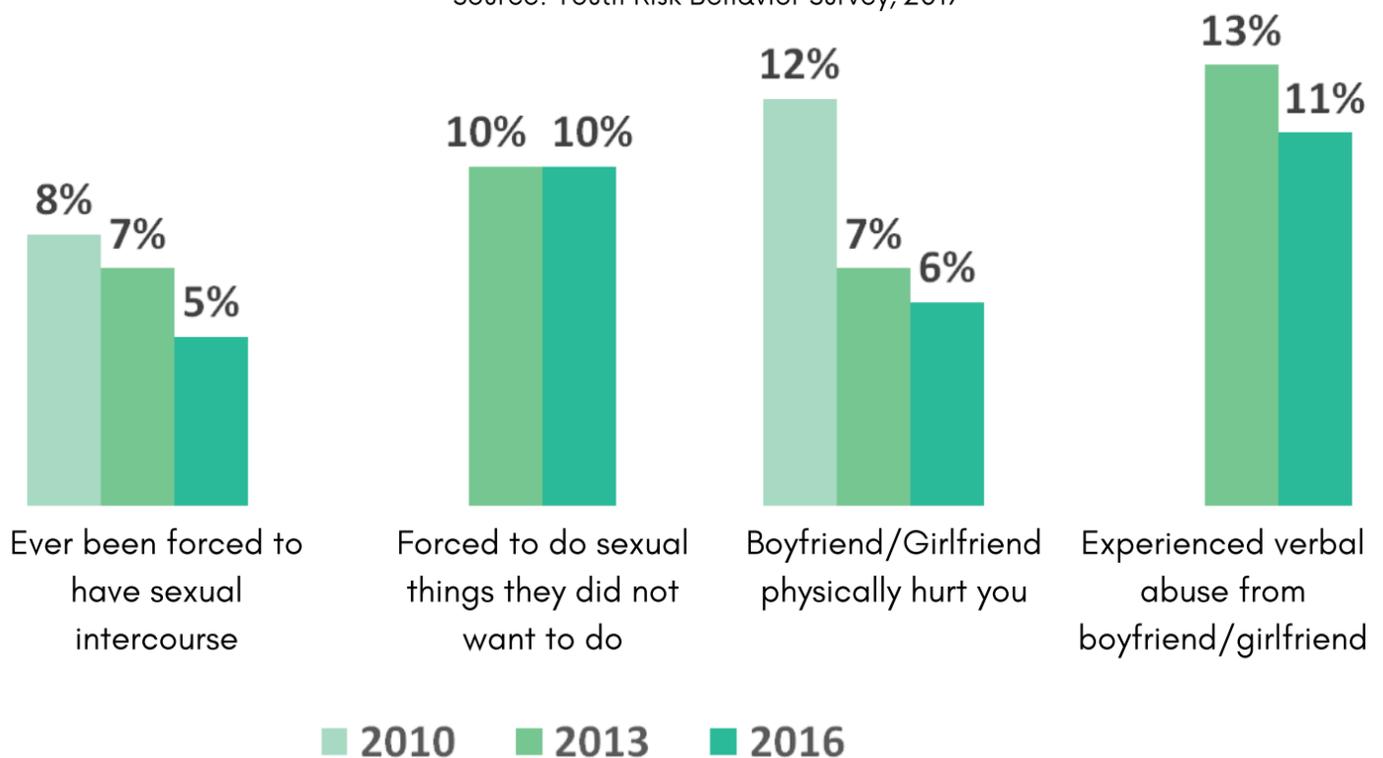
Unhealthy relationships, on the other hand, usually have an imbalance of power. Some unhealthy relationships become physically, emotionally, or sexually violent. Youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety, engage in unhealthy behaviors, and think about suicide. Sexual and domestic violence are serious societal problems that can have lasting, harmful effects on victims and their family, friends, and communities.

Youth in Alexandria are experiencing violence as we speak. In the past year, the Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program served 124 youth who experienced sexual and domestic violence. This is why we need good services to respond to violence and why we must focus on prevention work at the same time. Creating and nurturing healthy identity development and healthy relationships among youth are effective strategies to prevent interpersonal violence and inter-generational violence.

## HOW WE ARE DOING

### Dating/Relationship Violence\*

Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2017



\*Obtaining accurate data on sexual violence is inherently difficult because it is understandably under-reported. The numbers are more a reflection of whether our community is a place where students feel comfortable reporting the incidents.



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## STRATEGY

Support peer to peer education and advocacy through the Keep it 360 Peer Advocate program

## CHAMPIONS

Alexandria Sexual Assault Center (SAC), Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria (SAPCA)

## PARTNERS

- [ACPS 21st Century Grant - Link Club](#)
- [Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities](#)
- [Capital Youth Empowerment Program](#)
- [Mayor's Campaign to End Bullying](#)

## WHAT DID WE DO?

- The SAC, SAPCA, and ACAP joined forces to hire and train eight teen peer advocates in sexual and domestic violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, sexual health education, and general advocacy and presentation skills



Four of the Keep It 360 Peer Advocates present a workshop to their peers

- Peer Advocates were empowered to educate youth across Alexandria about healthy relationships and prevention through workshops, social media, and forums
- Peer Advocates were provided with opportunities to serve on City leadership bodies and lead events that engaged the public on youth experiences

## HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

8

Keep It 360 Peer Advocates Hired

124

Alexandria youth received services from the Sexual Assault Center and Domestic Violence Program

12

Workshops Delivered

85-115

Workshop Participants



## HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

100%

Peer Advocate Positions Filled

100%

Peer Advocates Satisfied with their Job





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## IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Middle School Students said the following after the Peer Advocates delivered workshops on healthy relationships and standing up for justice and equity:

- "I like the collaboration" and "working together as a team."
- "I really like the activities" and "it made me feel smart."
- "I liked that I could think about alternate futures and endings."
- "I liked that it talks about the good and bad about a relationship."
- "It taught me things about relationships, which I could use in the future."
- "I like that we learn something every class" and "I learned new things."



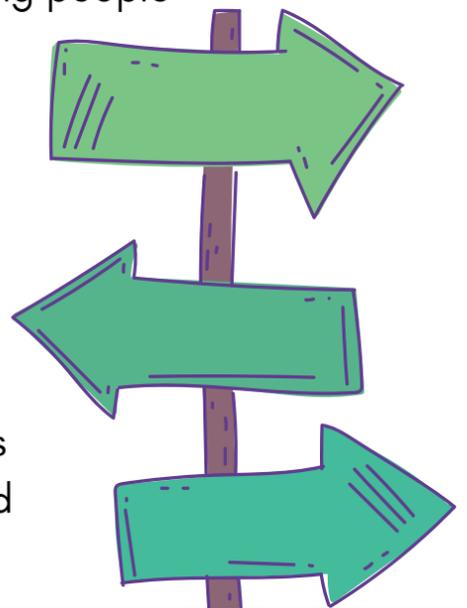
- "I got to learn about my past."
- "Amazing facilitators." "I like that they answered our questions." "They help me understand the importance of relationships."
- "I like that we can talk as kids" and "I like how we could share our minds."

Currently only qualitative data are available through the use of workshop evaluations.

## WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Between now and 2025, the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center will:

- Deliver the DO YOU program with a cohort of Alexandria youth. DO YOU addresses youth violence by confronting root causes and enhancing protective factors (building resilience) to promote positive development and healthy relationships for young people age 13-16 years old. The program uses primary prevention principles and creative expression as strategies intended to prevent violence before it ever starts.
- Collaborate with City and non-profit leaders and implement programs that focus on healthy relationships and violence prevention
- Serve as a resource to ACPS staff and teachers on domestic and sexual violence prevention and response



## RESOURCES

- **Raise Your Voice to Help Neighbors at Risk of Abuse:** How to recognize signs of abuse in children and adults. View or download the flyer in **English**, **Spanish**, **Amharic** or **Arabic**.
- If you are experiencing **sexual or intimate partner violence** or know someone who is, we are here 24/7 to help. Visit
  - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/SexualViolence>
  - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/DomesticViolence>
  - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/LGBTQ>
  - or call anytime day or night: 703-683-7273 or 703-746-4911
- For resources on **substance abuse**, visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/SAPCA>
- For resources on **healthy sexuality and pregnancy prevention**, visit: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/ACAP>
- Follow us on: (@alexandriateenlife) @AlexTeenLife

